



Aruba welcomes the 3rd FCAA Congress and world renowned architects to its shores

On Wednesday evening, the official opening of the 3rd Congress of the Federation of Caribbean Associations of Architects took place at the Renaissance Convention Center in Oranjestad. Welcoming delegates from architectural firms from all over the region were Leo Ponson, president of ADIAA, which stands for Association of Aruban Engineers and Architects in Papiamentu, and Orlando Hoeverstz, ADIAA member and coordinator for this year's congress. They welcomed the gathering in the many languages that are spoken by the multi-cultural membership of the FCAA.

His Excellency, Prime Minister Nel Oduber also addressed and welcomed the delegates with a warm "Bon Bini." He expressed in particular his satisfaction with the theme of this year's congress, "The Impact of Tourism on Architecture, & Vice/Versa." He mentioned how appropriate this topic was in regards to the choice of venue for 2006. "Aruba has long been a trendsetter in the tourist industry of the Caribbean," declared the Prime Minister, "...we have not been blessed with an abundance of natural resources, however the Creator awarded us with the most important resource, namely our people. Aruba is known as "One Happy Island," but do not be misled by this slogan. Aside from being happy, most of the time the Arubans are gregarious, productive, and creative. This is also the case in the building industry." He then extolled the many advances made in the island in the building industry over the last years.

Finally, the President of the FCAA, Jack Sainsily of Guadeloupe was invited to the podium to address the gathering, which he did in his native French. He asserted that even though the FCAA is a young organization, it is a very important one for all the members, as they represent nations that owe a major portion of their economic stability to tourism. Mr. Sansily finished his address by presenting gifts to the congress organizers and Prime Minister Oduber. A dramatic dance by Aruban showman Jhon Freddy Montoya led the gathering, with Prime Minister Oduber in the lead into the conference hall, where they could enjoy a taste of the Expo Cas 2006 and the Expo Arte that have been organized in compliment to the congress.

The 3rd FCAA has enticed an impressive roster of speakers to Aruba, including two of the world's top architects, C.C. Pei of Pei Partnership Architects and John Diebboll, Principal and Lead Designer at Michael Graves & Associates in New York City. Other internationally noted personalities in the tourism and architectural industry will address the gathering on the topics "Eco-tourism & Small Resorts," "What Moves the People," "Mass Tourism," and "Project Development." These are topics of great interest to not only FCAA members, but also anyone that is concerned with the future of the tourism industry and its impact on not only private and public finances, but also the ecology.

Two extensive days of lectures will be punctuated with social events that provide a window to the culture of their host island. Aruba has "rolled out the red carpet" for the delegates of this prestigious event and it promises to be a stimulating and informative two days for the over one hundred delegates attending.